

## Health Professional Shortage Area Designations

### Program Objective:

The Bureau of Primary Care, Rural, and Ethnic Health (BPCREH) coordinates federal, state and local efforts aimed at improving the health of Utah's rural, medically underserved, and multi cultural residents. The BPCREH assists the federal Division of Shortage Designations in the process of designating areas and facilities in Utah as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas/Medically Underserved Populations (MUA/MUPs)..

### Short Description and Background:

Shortage designation has two parts:

- 1) **HPSA** (Health Professional Shortage Area) designations are good for three years. After three years they must be reevaluated and a redesignation application submitted for approval. Because the Bureau has aggressively pursued HPSA designations currently Utah has at least a part of every county in the state designated as a Primary Medical Care HPSA, at least part of every county in the state designated as a Dental Care HPSA, and all the counties except Davis and Salt Lake designated as a Mental Health HPSA.
- 2) **MUA/MUP** (Medically Underserved Area/Medically Underserved Population) designations are one-time designations, but they are harder to justify. Utah has 7 whole county MUAs, 6 partial county MUAs, and 1 partial county MUP. Community Health Centers must be located in a MUA or MUP.

### Program Accomplishments:

Since 1998, the BPCREH has engaged in a proactive strategy to develop federally designated health professions shortage designations, commonly known as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (MUA/Ps). These designations are necessary for qualifying for many federal programs, including the National Health Service Corps, higher Medicare reimbursement, and Area Health Education Incentives. All but the MUA/Ps designations must be reanalyzed on a 3-year basis.

### Fiscal Implications:

Loss of HPSA designations and new MUAs and MUPs mean:

- 1) National Health Service Corps Scholars and Loan Repayment Recipients can only be placed in designated HPSAs. Therefore, Utah will no longer be able to use this recruitment and retention tool. Providers affected by this include primary care physicians, psychiatrists, mental health therapists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, nurses, dentists, and dental hygienists.
- 2) Physicians in geographic HPSAs will not receive an additional 10% for Medicare patient services (Medicare bonus).
- 3) Rural Health Clinics will not receive cost based reimbursement for services provided to Medicare patients. They will lose their Rural Health Clinic status if the area no longer has a HPSA designation.
- 4) Existing Community Health Centers are unlikely to receive funding to expand their services. New Community Health Centers in Utah are unlikely to be funded.
- 5) The University of Utah School of Medicine, colleges of nursing, and College of Pharmacy will not receive preference for federal grants because they will no longer be in a HPSA.

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